Study Unit

Meeting Your Client's Needs

Is the career of decorating based on transforming empty rooms into works of art? If so, how useful are beautifully decorated rooms if they don't meet a client's fundamental, basic needs? Custom decorating is useful only if the rooms are both attractive and functional. However, everyone has a different idea of what *attractive* and *functional* mean. As a decorator, you must establish your individual client's needs. That is, you should determine what makes a room attractive and functional for that specific client. Every client has different needs based on their preferences and lifestyles. It's up to you to meet those needs in any room you decorate for a particular client. This study unit provides you with methods to determine and meet the needs of your decorating clients.

When you complete this study unit, you'll be able to

- Recognize the need for custom decorating
- Identify basic physical and psychological needs common to most clients
- Observe a specific client's needs in the categories of family membership (personal characteristics) and room-by-room activities
- Determine a client's preferences in regard to furniture styles, colors, fabrics, textures, and patterns
- Establish a furnishings inventory for your client
- Determine your client's goal and budget priorities
- Identify the basic shape and structural features of an unfurnished room

Preview

Remember to regularly check "My Courses" on your student homepage. Your instructor may post additional resources that you can access to enhance your learning experience.

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Color is an extremely integral part of interior decorating. Therefore, as you work through your program, be sure to study the photos and illustrations in their color format, available as PDFs. To access the PDFs, log on to the Penn Foster Web site and click on **My Courses.** Then, click on the open-book icon next to the unit you're studying.

Meeting Your Client's Needs

MEETING YOUR DECORATING CLIENT

The Key to Successful Decorating

Have you ever had a wonderful decorating plan for a room? Perhaps you've mentally furnished that room right down to flowers and wastebaskets. That type of planning is what interior decorators do.

As a decorator, you'll daily come in contact with many new fabrics, wallcoverings, and furnishings. As you examine these new items, you'll soon find that you're thinking of new ways to use them. Nevertheless, wise professionals save these decorating ideas for special events. For example, an invitation to decorate a room for a decorator's showhouse is such an event. A *decorator's showhouse* is usually a charity event in which decorators donate their talent and materials to create room displays.

Truly professional interior decoration begins with two considerations:

- A particular space to be decorated
- A client who will occupy that space

The most successful interiors are created with these two factors in mind. They meet clients' personal needs within the limitations of the room (Figure 1). Of course, the opposite is true as well. Unsuccessful interiors result when a decorator

FIGURE 1—A successful decorator listens to what clients say about their own needs and about the areas to be decorated.

ignores both the client and the area to be decorated and instead develops a plan that suits the decorator instead of the client.

Does that mean a client must pay a lot of money for custom decorating? Not at all.

At some time, you've undoubtedly walked into a room that made you feel particularly good. It may have been a very simple, modest room, but it gave you the feeling that it reflected the owner's personality.

On the other hand, you've probably at some time walked into a room that was obviously carefully (and expensively!) decorated, and found it too cold and unappealing.

Successful interior decoration doesn't depend on costly furnishings or arrangements according to some rigid formula. Rather, good creative interior decoration requires knowledge of the elements and materials of design and decoration. Equally important is the ability to use that knowledge to fulfill each client's needs.

So what is the key to successful interior decorating? The key is to take your knowledge of interior decorating and combine that with the information you receive from your clients. When done properly, the finished job should be something beautiful that accurately reflects your clients' personalities.

Your Role: Making a House a Home

Single houses, townhouses, apartments, condominiums, mountain cabins, mobile homes, duplexes, and triplexes are continually being built by the housing industry. People will eventually live in each one of these places. Someone will call each of them *home* (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2—Every new residence that's constructed will eventually be home for someone.

Most people have strong feelings about their homes. They want home to be the most comfortable, attractive, and personal place it can possibly be. Yet why do you think many people aren't completely satisfied with their homes?

Usually, people are unhappy with their homes because they haven't had the benefit of interior decorating skills. It takes special knowledge and training to put together a home that's

highly comfortable, attractive, and personal. Most people don't have this knowledge and training. As a result, they may have a crowded living room where they always bump their legs on the coffee table. Their room may not have a comfortable chair and reading light for looking at the evening paper. They may have a slightly unattractive color on the walls because they still haven't managed to choose the right color.

When home doesn't feel like their home, most people find themselves dissatisfied with their impersonal surroundings. They look around and see all of the necessary basic furnishings, but somehow, the home doesn't reflect their personality. In fact, it could be anybody's home.

When people live in a neighborhood where the exteriors of the homes and the front yards are similar, they have an even greater need for a home interior that's comfortable, pleasing, and very personal—something that sets them apart from their neighbors (Figure 3). Achieving this personal essence calls for the trained skills of an interior decorator.

Have you noticed that we've been speaking of people's needs? As a decorating professional, your clients' needs should always be foremost in your mind. Start determining these needs with your very first client meeting.

FIGURE 3—When the exteriors of homes in a neighborhood are similar, then people want their interiors to be unique.

A Client's Basic Needs

A decorating job must, above all, fulfill the human needs of the person who uses the room. It doesn't matter whether the person is a stranger or a friend. In either case, you should determine the client's personal decorating needs by conducting an interview. To learn techniques for conducting the client interview, you'll use a series of Profile Questionnaires found throughout this study unit.

First, let's identify the important human needs and then consider how they relate to the practical aspects of decorating. Basic human needs fall into two broad groups:

1. Physical needs
2. Psychological needs

Physical Needs

Physical needs include

- Effective shelter from the weather
- Comfortable seating and sleeping
- Suitable and convenient food preparation and dining areas

A room isn't properly decorated if it doesn't fulfill its practical function, regardless of its attractiveness. For instance, a delicate dining room table that wobbles when you cut on it isn't a practical decorating choice. A window treatment that looks beautiful but doesn't provide shade from glaring afternoon sun isn't a good choice. A furniture arrangement that's too cramped for easy movement also isn't successful interior decoration. Good interior decoration must fully meet the physical needs of your clients.

Psychological Needs

Psychological needs are also very important to consider. They vary more from one individual to the next than physical needs. Part of your success in recognizing your client's psychological needs comes from your sensitivity to human nature. However, you can learn to make sharp-eyed observations during your interview with your client. You can also draw some observations from the existing decor if you visit a client's home. For example, look at the room pictured in Figure 4. Can you see anything in the photo that tells you something about the psychological needs of the people who live here?

FIGURE 4—Rooms talk. What does this room tell you about the lifestyles of its occupants? Obviously, entertainment is a priority. The elaborate entertainment center and comfortable seating make this the perfect room in which to enjoy a movie or some music. (Photo courtesy of Thomasville Furniture Industries)

When you first meet a prospective client, you should consider some common psychological needs that most people share.

The need for privacy. Almost everyone needs a private place to be alone with uninterrupted thoughts—a place to shed social behavior and relax. This strong need exists for many people who have busy, demanding, and often physically crowded lifestyles.

A sense of belonging. A home gives a person a sense of belonging. It provides appropriate places for keeping personal possessions and space to engage in favorite activities. Learn about an individual's activities and possessions, and then use your decorating skills to satisfy this need for belonging.

A sense of security. People need to feel that they're safe and that their possessions will be untouched by strangers or nature. Strong walls, a solid roof, and locked doors may satisfy the physical need for protection. However, a person needs to *feel* protected as well as *be* protected. This secure feeling can result when an interior decorator's skill creates a sense of warmth and protection. For example, a wall of glass overlooking a spectacular view may be dramatically effective. However, such exposure may make the room an uncomfortable place to be during a windstorm or rainstorm. A wise decorator may suggest a heavy drapery drawn over the glass during storms to satisfy the need for a sense of security.

Aesthetic needs. The term *aesthetic* refers to the need to satisfy the senses with beauty. People love beauty. Beautiful objects, sculpture, and fine china may please the senses and lift the spirit. A person with a limited budget should have as much aesthetic satisfaction as the person with a generous budget. A skillful decorator can add aesthetic appeal on a very modest budget by using pleasing color and design effects.

Individual psychological needs are related more to the client's personality than to the common needs of all people. Some people feel a need for their surroundings to reflect their actual lifestyles. Others want their rooms to reflect lifestyles that they would like to have. Again, you'll need to become a keen observer of human nature to recognize your client's psychological needs.

For example, a socially active couple particularly conscious of their standing in the community might want their home decor to reflect their social position. Otherwise, they may feel uncomfortable. They would most likely expect a certain degree of formality and luxury in their surroundings. They would need ample seating for frequent entertaining. People who are proud of a very social lifestyle usually want to display it.

Depending on your individual client, you may fulfill even more physical and psychological needs. Try to arrive at a true picture of your clients' needs. Take into account their hobbies, ambitions, and personal tastes. The more information you can gather, the better will be the results of your decorating. Always use this information as the foundation of your decorating plan.

The Creative Client Interview: The Empty-Canvas Approach

Each meeting with a new client is a special event. Because you don't yet know the client's needs, the rooms you'll create should be an empty canvas in your mind. You'll do your clients an injustice if you begin with preconceived ideas of what they want. And don't impose your style and taste on any client. For example, suppose you just saw an exquisite dining table in a furniture showroom. You would love to incorporate it into one of your designs. Don't be tempted to do this unless the table fits the client's physical and psychological needs.

At the beginning of any client interview, always sweep your mind clear of ideas. Start the interview with the empty-canvas approach. Later, when you have all of the information you need, you'll be able to develop your decorating plan.

When possible, conduct the initial client interview at the client's present home. Homes, like the people who live in them, come in all different styles and sizes (Figure 5). When you visit a prospect's home, be a keen observer. Look at the outside, the garden and yard, and then, of course, the current interior. The details of a home can tell you a great deal about its occupants.

FIGURE 5—When meeting at the homes of clients, take the time to carefully observe your surroundings. A home can tell a story about the people who live in it.

You can learn a great deal about your clients by observation—if you carefully evaluate what you observe. However, be sure you don't jump to conclusions about a client's tastes based on what you see. A client may really dislike her living room furniture, but she's using it because it was passed on to her by a relative some years ago. She may not even care for the color scheme of the room. It may have been planned simply to go with the furniture. On the other hand, a rickety old

chair in the corner may be a prized possession of great sentimental value that she wants incorporated into her new decorating scheme. Learning all about these particulars is important to you before you begin to plan a new decor.

As you visit with prospective clients, avoid expressing opinions about items in their homes.

Although a client's home may be the ideal place for an initial interview, you can still get all of the information you need, no matter where the meeting occurs. Ask your clients to tell you about each item in the room or rooms they wish to decorate. Which pieces do they absolutely want to keep? Which items do they want to dispose of because they absolutely dislike them? You'll soon end up with a list to aid you in developing your plan. It also tells you something about their tastes without putting you in the position of accidentally offending their feelings.

By observing your clients' surroundings, you can gain information about their lifestyles and needs that they might not think of telling you themselves. Your clients may be very eager to tell you all about themselves and what they want from your decorating efforts. They may speak openly about favorite colors and furniture styles. They may also discuss how they lived for years in the north woods before moving to the city. Meanwhile, it never occurs to them to mention the pair of parrots standing on perches in the middle of the living room. Your clients don't remark on the three dogs and two cats that romp through the room. They also haven't mentioned their eight-year-old son's favorite six-foot-tall steel sculpture, although it's presently standing proudly in the corner of the hallway. These are all important points to consider in your decorating scheme. However, they might never have come to your attention if you hadn't seen them yourself or asked the right questions.

Some of the information you ask for in a client meeting is fairly personal. While some people don't mind talking about themselves, others are cautious about discussing their private lives. Explain that all of your questions are solely to determine how best to satisfy their needs. Sometimes the best way to obtain this needed information is the most direct way. You can simply assure them that anything they tell you will remain completely confidential. In other situations, you can convey this idea more discreetly. Always carry a manila folder

to a client meeting. Put in the folder all of the information you gather during the interview. Make a point of writing your clients' names and the word *Confidential* on the front of their folders while you chat with them (Figure 6). You can be sure this action will catch their attention, either while you write it or later. Seeing the word *Confidential* in writing is frequently more reassuring than your spoken words.

FIGURE 6—If a client sees a folder with her name and the word* Confidential *on it, she may be more willing to share important personal information.

The Profile Questionnaires you'll be studying in this unit can be of great assistance to you in gathering information. The questionnaires help you gather all of the information you need. They also aid you in steering the conversation back on track. When clients take the conversation off on a tangent, you can glance at your profile questions. When they see you have many questions yet to ask, they won't be offended if you have to detour the conversation to the next item on your list. The open folder and pen you hold remind talkative clients that this visit is business. Your valuable professional time is involved.

Whether your clients are open and talkative or secretive and quiet, you must be the one to direct the conversation. By the end of the interview, you should know all that you need to know to begin your decorating job.

Other clients may seem intimidated by the idea of having their personal information set down in writing. In dealing with such clients, you can set aside the folder for moments at a time. Give them a chance to relax and to build confidence in you.

Client-Needs Analyzer Profiles

Throughout the remainder of this study unit, you'll be examining a series of profiles that you can use to help analyze your clients' needs:

1. Family Membership and Personal Characteristics Profile
2. Room-by-Room Activities Profiles
3. Furniture Style Preferences Profile
4. Color Preferences Profile
5. Fabric, Texture, and Pattern Preferences Profile
6. Mood Preference Profile
7. Room-by-Room Furnishings Inventory Profile
8. Client Goals and Budget Priorities Profile
9. Measurements and Rough Sketches Profile
10. Room Drawing to Scale Profile
11. Samples Profile

All of the Client-Needs Analyzer Profiles covered in this study unit are available as PDFs on your "My Courses" page. Please feel free to make copies of these forms for use during your program and later in your career as an interior decorator.

These Client-Needs Analyzer Profiles will guide you as you conduct important client interviews. The sheets are especially helpful if a client wishes one or more rooms totally redecorated. However, you can also use the profiles even if a client is looking for just one particular piece of furniture or if a client wants an entire house or apartment redone. Whatever the case, the easy-to-use Client-Needs Analyzer Profiles will guide you through interviews. The sheets keep you focused on the decorating issues and help you track your clients' answers. You can work through the profiles question by question with your clients. You can also use the sheets to note information you learn through casual conversation. By conducting client interviews, you'll begin to form a trusting, professional relationship with your clients.

Family Membership and Personal Characteristics Profile

The more you know about your clients and their homes, the better prepared you'll be to assist them in making choices that meet their needs and please the senses.

Use the *Family Membership and Personal Characteristics Profile* (Figure 7) to gather pertinent information on clients' family members. The profile has space for your notes on age, general physical type, personality, and clothing style. It also contains space for clients' answers to questions about occupation, favorite hobbies, and other nonoccupational interests and activities.

Let's examine some of the elements of this sheet.

Approximate age. It isn't necessary to ask a client's exact age; your estimate is sufficient. It's important, however, to ask the ages of children in the family, since children have considerable bearing on your decorating plan.

If there are no children in the family, your clients' ages act only as a general guideline to decor planning. You usually won't plan the same sort of interior for a couple in their 50s as for a couple in their 20s. There are exceptions, of course. The detailed information about the clients' lifestyles will determine the decor you develop for them more than their ages will.

However, when you're looking at the clients' answers, their age bracket will give you some guidance. For a couple in their 60s, for example, you probably wouldn't string up a rope hammock in the corner of their indoor-outdoor family room. A young couple, however, might find that a wonderful touch for comfortable lounging.

Physical type. Notes on the clients' general physical types will give you considerable assistance in planning their decor. For example, suppose you're interviewing a couple who are both tall, large-boned, and athletic-looking. You would probably avoid using small-scale delicate pieces in their home. Delicacy in colors and furnishings doesn't suit them, and they would probably be uncomfortable with these choices. For this couple, you should scale all furnishings to their height.

On the other hand, suppose you're interviewing a couple of two different physical types. In this case, you'll need to consider their differences when you help select furnishings. For instance, a tall, stocky husband and a petite, delicate wife should be planned for differently. A set of matched lounge chairs might look good in the room you're developing for them.

However, when you refer to their profile, you notice that these furnishings just won't work. You realize for each to be comfortable and look right in their surroundings, they'll need two totally different lounge chairs. All aspects of your decorating plan should accommodate their differences.

> ***Looking Right***
>
> In addition to considering physical comfort, you must also think about how a client will look in the room or rooms you decorate. Any decorating plan can't really be good if the person who will live with it looks out of place. The environment you create must complement your client's physical size.

Personality. In making observations about a client's personality, don't leap to conclusions. Occasionally, you may need a few meetings before you're sure you have an accurate impression. For example, a husband who appeared to be very quiet and introverted in the first meeting may have been tired or worried about something that happened at work. The next meeting under different circumstances might reveal a more outgoing personality. Or a wife who appeared reserved and formal during the first meeting may simply be a little uncomfortable about having a professional decorator see her shabby living room. As you put her more at ease, you may find that she reveals a bubbly, lighthearted personality.

Experience and your sensitivity to people will help you to come up with accurate personality judgments. Then, when you make your decorating plans, you'll be able to take into account that Mr. Carson likes quiet and tranquility, while Mrs. Carson likes a lot of activity around her. You'll realize that your plan needs to provide a peaceful retreat for Mr. Carson and a stimulating decor for his wife.

Clothing style. Clients' clothing choices usually tell you a great deal about how they see themselves. Of course, you should consider whether what they're wearing is typical. Perhaps you found Mr. Jones in that loud print shirt simply because he was fixing something in the basement. He was wearing the shirt he dislikes most since he knew he would get dirty.

Usually, the person who dresses in conservative clothing will probably want his or her interior environment to be equally conservative. The person who dresses flamboyantly or in the latest trend will generally want an equally showy environment. The colors and types of patterns in a person's clothing will usually be good clues to what the client will prefer in furnishings. The person who wears large bold prints will usually react favorably to bold patterns and colors in home interiors.

One noted decorator has a clever way of learning about his clients' tastes. During the first in-home interview, he asks clients to show him their favorite piece of clothing. He relies on his impressions of what they show him as a guide to what general style, patterns, and colors they may favor in their interiors.

Occupation. As you plan the home environment of a client, you may need to consider that person's occupation. Some occupations require that a person's home reflect that occupation for business reasons. For example, if the client owns an electronics company and entertains business clients at home, it's good business for that client's home to feature the most impressive electronic aids.

Another person may want his or her home to be a complete oasis from reminders of business. However, you, as the decorator, must also consider whether your client does sometimes bring work home. If so, you'll help the client preserve the serenity of his or her home environment by planning an unobtrusive workplace. This place will be used only for work at home—a place the client can leave and not be reminded of work in the rest of the home. The sort of space you develop depends on the nature of the work the client brings home. Does it consist of small papers and books to read, big blueprints to spread out, or prototype models of new inventions to test? Knowing your client's occupation and work habits will help you develop a well-suited interior decorating plan.

Hobbies. You'll need to make provisions in your decorating plan for your clients' hobbies and other activities. If Mrs. Jones conducts a weekly meeting in her home, you should provide comfortable seating and serving facilities for a large group. If a son is a model railroad buff, you must consider allowing space for him to keep his latest display assembled.

Take some time now to study Figure 7. As you read each item in the Family Membership/Personal Characteristics Profile, think about how this information might help you as an interior decorator.

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS PROFILE				
	Client	**Client**	**Children**	**Others in household (+ relationship)**
Name				
Approximate age				
Physical type				
Personality				
Clothing style				
Occupation				
Work at home?				
If so, how often?				
What type?				
Business entertaining at home		Frequency		
		Size of groups		
Social entertaining at home		Frequency		
		Size of groups		
Club and civic activities at home		Frequency		
		Size of groups		
Special interests or awards				
Hobbies				
Other special requirements				
Likely to move within five years?				

FIGURE 7—Family Membership and Personal Characteristics Profile

Room-by-Room Activities Profiles

The *Room-by-Room Activities Profiles* help you to determine what your clients use each room in their house for. You should complete an Activities Profile for every room to be decorated. Go over each item on the profile with your clients and ask them to respond to your questions. The answers to these questions will directly assist you in developing your decorating plan. Review the activities list item by item for a particular room. Then, always ask if there are other activities conducted in that room.

If you have the opportunity, inspect the rooms yourself to see if you observe signs of still other activities. Often clients overlook the most apparent things simply because they're so obvious. For instance, you might see an enormous collection of houseplants taking up the entire living room window. On questioning, you discover that the window is the one place in the house with both space and the proper light exposure for this small jungle. Mrs. Jones didn't list gardening as a hobby. She has never thought of herself as a gardener. Her collection of plants just grew and there it sits, and will sit. You can forget using that end of the living room for any other purpose in your decorating scheme. However, you can help to make the most of her collection if you know it's there. You might add dramatic spotlights and a raised, pebble-filled tray on which to set the plants, making a better appearance and making their care easier.

Habit is strong. Many habits develop for good, practical reasons. For example, Mrs. Jones writes letters and pays bills at a small desk in her bedroom. The desk is away from the children's play area. She works there because she has long since learned that's where she can concentrate best. Perhaps, also, the best daytime light is in that room, or maybe the desk provides a favorite view of the garden that makes her task more pleasant. She would probably be reluctant to move her desk into another room. Including a window treatment that provides light during the day and privacy at night would meet her requirements for both nighttime and daytime use of the room.

In some cases, when you look over the activities profile, you may see a way to make major improvements in convenience for the clients. This improvement may be accomplished by switching some activities from one room to another. If you're confident that your clients will experience much greater convenience in a new arrangement, you'll probably be able to persuade them to change.

On the other hand, if you're tempted to ask them to rearrange their activity areas simply for appearance (because you're convinced that little writing desk would look much better in the family room, for example), don't do it. Your clients will be unhappy if you ask them to change their habits without giving them equal or greater comfort and convenience in exchange.

Although most homes have a living room, dining room, kitchen, bedrooms, and bathroom, today other special-purpose rooms are often incorporated into homes. Examples of such rooms include home theaters, home offices, and fitness rooms. Sometimes the activities of these rooms are incorporated into other rooms in a home; at other times, entire rooms are dedicated for these purposes.

As an interior decorator planning one of these rooms, you may have to hire a professional that specializes in certain electronics or other equipment. You can coordinate the professional's efforts and charge a fee or commission on the project. You, however, would be largely responsible for the decorating elements in the room.

Before going on, examine each of the different Room-by-Room Activities Profiles (Figures 8 to 17). Notice how detailed each profile is and how many factors you must consider if you're going to create a decor that suits your clients.

ROOM-BY-ROOM ACTIVITIES PROFILE		
LIVING ROOM		
Check if applicable	**Activity**	**Approximate number of persons participating**
❒	Television viewing	
❒	Socializing	
❒	Studying	
❒	Reading	
❒	Playing piano or other musical instruments	
❒	Using a personal computer	
❒	Watching movies	
❒	Listening to music	
Entertaining		
❒	Adult friends	
❒	Children's friends	
❒	Other families	
❒	Business guests	
❒	Church or social groups	
❒	Others	
Other Activities		
❒	Games? Type?	
❒	Hobbies? Type?	
❒	Crafts? Type?	
❒	Display of collections? Type?	
Lighting Needs	**Sufficient**	**Needed**
Table lamps		
Floor lamps		
Overhead light		
Spotlights		
Other		

FIGURE 8—Room-by-Room Activities Profiles: Living Room

ROOM-BY-ROOM ACTIVITIES PROFILE		
FAMILY ROOM		
Check if applicable	**Activity**	**Approximate number of persons participating**
❒	Television viewing	
❒	Socializing	
❒	Studying	
❒	Reading	
❒	Playing piano or other musical instruments	
❒	Using a personal computer	
❒	Watching movies	
❒	Listening to music	
Entertaining		
❒	Adult friends	
❒	Children's friends	
❒	Other families	
❒	Business guests	
❒	Church or social groups	
❒	Others	
Other Activities		
❒	Games? Type?	
❒	Hobbies? Type?	
❒	Crafts? Type?	
❒	Display of collections? Type?	
Lighting Needs	**Sufficient**	**Needed**
Table lamps		
Floor lamps		
Overhead light		
Spotlights		
Other		

FIGURE 9—Room-by-Room Activities Profiles: Family Room

ROOM-BY-ROOM ACTIVITIES PROFILE		
DINING ROOM		
Type of Dining Area		**Check**
Separate room		
Dining area part of L-shaped dining-living room		
Dining area in living room		
Other		
Seating for Meals	**Check**	**Number to be seated**
Breakfast		
Lunch		
Dinner		
Other		
How often is maximum seating needed?		
Type of Dining		**Check**
Formal		
Informal		
Both		
Other Functions	**Check**	**Specify**
Studying or working		
Reading		
Displaying collections		
Other		
Storage and Other Needs	**Check**	**Specify**
Dishes		
Silverware		
Tablecloths		
Surface for serving		
Other		
Electrical Needs	**Have**	**Need**
Miscellaneous outlets		
Dimmer		
Chandelier		
Other		

FIGURE 10—Room-by-Room Activities Profile: Dining Room

ROOM-BY-ROOM ACTIVITIES PROFILE			
BEDROOMS			
In addition to sleeping, do any of these activities take place in the area?			
	Master Bedroom	**Children's Bedroom**	**Guest Bedroom**
Studying			
Sitting			
Sewing			
Snacking			
Television viewing			
Listening to music			
Telephoning			
Dressing, grooming, and so on			
Reading in bed			
Sleeping during daylight hours (lightproof window covering needed?)			
Other			

FIGURE 11—Room-by-Room Activities Profiles: Bedrooms

ROOM-BY-ROOM ACTIVITIES PROFILE	
KITCHEN	
Meal Preparation	
Breakfast	
Lunch	
Dinner	
Snacks	
Casual lunches or suppers	
Type of Cooking	
Simple, fast family meals	
Simple, occasionally elaborate meals for entertaining	
Experimental cooking as a hobbyist	
Gourmet-style cooking	
Frequent large-quantity cooking for entertaining large groups	
Entertain Friends in Kitchen While Cooking?	
Usual number?	
Cooking Utensils	
Basic	
Extensive collection	
Seating	
Type of seating	
For how many?	

FIGURE 12—Room-by-Room Activities Profiles: Kitchen

ROOM-BY-ROOM ACTIVITIES PROFILE		
ENTRY		
Facilities	**Have**	**Need**
Closet		
Guest closet		
Coat rack		
Coat hooks		
Mirror		
Shelf or surface on which to lay things		
Place to sit (to put on boots, await family members, and so on)		
Storage for	**Have**	**Need**
1.		
2.		
3.		
Lighting	**Have**	**Need**
Chandelier		
Lamp		

FIGURE 13—Room-by-Room Activities Profiles: Entry

ROOM-BY-ROOM ACTIVITIES PROFILE	
BATHROOMS	
Number of bathrooms	
Full bathrooms	
Three-quarter bathrooms	
Powder rooms	
Coat hooks	
Which family members share which bathrooms?	
Which bathrooms are shared during morning rush hours?	
Are washbasins double or single?	
Bathrooms are used for	
Dressing and changing	
Grooming and applying makeup	
Doing laundry	
Hairstyling	
Storing of towels and linens	
Other (Jacuzzi, whirlpool bath)	
Existing cupboard space in each bathroom	
Number of cupboards	
Number of shelves in each cupboard	
Existing counter space in each bathroom	
Measure areas	

FIGURE 14—Room-by-Room Activities Profiles: Bathrooms

ROOM-BY-ROOM ACTIVITIES PROFILE		
HOME THEATER		
Decorating a home theater involves more than just decorating skills. You must have knowledge of current technologies and electronic systems. Therefore, if you're hired to decorate a home theater, you should seek the assistance and advice of a professional in the field of electronics. For more information on home theaters, visit **http://electronics.howstuffworks.com/home-theater.htm,** where you'll find a number of helpful articles.		
Check if applicable	**Activity**	**Approximate number of persons participating**
❒	Television viewing	
❒	Socializing	
❒	Watching movies	
❒	Listening to music	
❒	Others	
Check if applicable	**Entertaining**	**Approximate number of persons participating**
❒	Adult friends	
❒	Children's friends	
❒	Family members	
❒	Business associates	
❒	Church or social groups	
❒	Others	
Furniture for seating	**Yes**	**No**
Sofa (standard)		
Sofa (sectional)		
Recliners		
Upholstered chairs		
Theater-type chairs		
Other furniture		
End tables		
TV trays		
		(Continued)

FIGURE 15—Room-by-Room Activities Profiles: Home Theater

HOME THEATER—Continued		
Furniture for seating	**Yes**	**No**
CD and DVD storage racks		
Entertainment center		
Other		
Upholstery	**Yes**	**No**
Leather		
Fabric (solid)		
Fabric (print)		
Kitchen/Bar Area	**Yes**	**No**
Counter		
Bar stools		
Sink		
Refrigerator		
Microwave		
Stove		
Cupboards		
Lighting Needs	**Sufficient**	**Needed**
Table lamps		
Floor lamps		
Overhead light		
Spotlights		
Other		

FIGURE 15—Continued

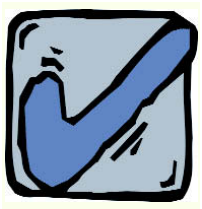
ROOM-BY-ROOM ACTIVITIES PROFILE		
HOME OFFICE		
What type of business is the office used for?		
How many people will use the office?		
Will clients visit the office?		
Will vendors visit the office?		
Will the office be used for other activities? If so, list those activities.		
Furniture	**Have**	**Need**
Desk(s)		
Desk chair(s)		
Chairs for guests		
Sofa		
Credenza		
File cabinet(s)		
Bookshelves		
End table(s)		
Magazine rack		
Equipment	**Have**	**Need**
Computer(s)		
Printer/scanner		
Fax machine		
Phones		
Copy machine		
Paper shredder		
Other equipment		
Lighting	**Have**	**Need**
Desk lamp(s)		
Floor lamp(s)		
Table lamp(s)		
Overhead lights		
Other		

FIGURE 16—Room-by-Room Activities Profiles: Home Office

ROOM-BY-ROOM ACTIVITIES PROFILE	
HOME FITNESS ROOM	
Many people today are setting aside a room in their homes to serve as a fitness center in which they have one or more pieces of exercise equipment like treadmills, stationary bicycles, and elliptical machines. Although a fitness room doesn't involve an interior decorator as much as other rooms in the home, you can still give some suggestions to make the room more attractive and comfortable.	
Questions to ask	
How many pieces of equipment do you plan to put in the room?	
Would you like a full-length mirror on one or more of the walls?	
Do you need a ballet bar along a wall?	
Do you need shelves or other storage areas for weights, jump ropes, and other small pieces of equipment?	
Do you need a closet or storage piece for towels, exercise clothing, and so on?	
Would you like a water cooler or a refrigerator you can stock with bottled water?	
What type of carpeting would you like (colorful, patterned, solid)?	
Do you plan to put a television or sound system in the room?	
Are there any other amenities you would like in the fitness room?	

FIGURE 17—Room-by-Room Activities Profiles: Home Fitness Room

Before you go on to examine how to determine your client's preferences, please take a few moments to complete *Self-Check 1.*



Self-Check 1

At the end of each section of *Meeting Your Client's Needs,* you'll be asked to pause and check your understanding of what you've just read by completing a "Self-Check" exercise. Answering these questions will help you review what you've studied so far. Please complete *Self-Check 1* now.

1. When you're developing a decorating plan, what two categories of your client's needs must you consider?

   _____

2. In developing a decorating scheme, what are two opposite approaches you might take regarding your client's lifestyle?

   _____

3. Of what importance is your client's physical appearance in developing your decorating plan?

   _____

4. Carol Norris, one of your clients, works in the insurance industry. What three things must you consider about her occupation when planning her decor?

   _____

5. Your client has three dogs that have always had the run of the house. Which of these is the better approach to decorating this home? Explain your choice in the space provided.

   a. Design an outdoor doghouse as part of your decorating plan.
   b. Plan a dogproof interior using materials that won't be damaged by the dogs.

   _____

   _____

Check your answers with those on page 61.

ESTABLISHING YOUR CLIENT'S PREFERENCES

At this point, you've made some observations in your clients' homes that give you an idea of their decorating style. It's also important to ask the clients about their style preferences. Clients feel much more confident that you're going to develop a decorating scheme that will suit them if they know you're considering their preferences. Specifically, you should ask them about their preferences related to

- Furniture style
- Color
- Fabric, texture, and pattern
- Mood

In this section of the study unit, you'll examine these four areas of importance.

Almost all clients want to tell you their likes and dislikes. Usually, you'll find them enthusiastic about this part of the interview.

Furniture Style Preferences Profile

The *Furniture Style Preferences Profile* (Figure 18) lists several broad style categories of furniture. Use this form to determine the style of furniture your clients prefer. Although many people know what they like and don't like, many others aren't sure of their preferences. In addition, a lot of people aren't familiar with the names of the different furniture styles. They may know what they like, but they don't know what it's called. It's your job to explain the different styles and possibly even show them examples.

FURNITURE STYLE PREFERENCES PROFILE		
Furniture Style	**Client Likes/Wants**	**Client Doesn't Like/Want**
Modern or Contemporary		
Traditional (English)		
Early American—Formal		
Early American—Informal		
French Provincial (Country French)		
Victorian		
Oriental		
Other		
Wants a mixture of _____ and _____		
Prefers antiques or new items?		
Style of client's present furniture		
Bedroom: Type of bedding preferred		
Twin bed (how many?)		
Double bed (how many?)		
Queen-size bed (how many?)		
King-size bed (how many?)		
Sofa bed (sleep 1 or 2?)		
Mattress (regular, soft, extra firm?)		
Water bed (size?)		
Special requirements		

FIGURE 18—Furniture Style Preferences Profile

When dealing with the question of furniture styles, you must be extremely careful that you understand what your clients are saying. For example, a client who likes modern styles may mean that she likes light colors and an uncluttered environment. That client may not be aware that these qualities are appropriate for a variety of styles. A client who likes Early American may simply be thinking of the cozy, relaxed feeling of a room with pine furniture and colorful, printed cushions. In fact, Early American furniture may not be at all suited to the person's environment. That client may be surprised to discover that he detests many pieces in true Early American style. The client is really looking for coziness, warmth, and casual comfort. It's up to you to show the client that it's possible to achieve this atmosphere with other styles.

Therefore, before you begin to review the Furniture Style Preference Profile with a client, you must first make sure the client understands the different furniture styles. How can you quickly educate your client about styles so that you both can communicate clearly? One of the best ways is to have samples of interior decorating magazines, furniture catalogs, and pictures that show room interiors in different styles (Figure 19). If a client can't name the particular style or period of furniture she likes, she can point it out in a picture for you. Invite the client to comment freely on different examples you find. Ask the client how he or she feels about specific items in each room. Make notes on the client's comments, or mark the pages for future reference. A client's spontaneous reactions provide valuable information. Even difficult clients who were indecisive or uninformative in earlier comments will respond to the use of visual aids.

Once you're sure you and your client understand each other, you can complete the Furniture Style Preferences Profile.

FIGURE 19—When you're trying to determine your clients' tastes in furniture styles, it's a good idea to have some photographs that you can show them as samples. Notice the differences in these three photographs of dining areas. Your clients may not know the difference between Early American and French Provincial, but they know what they like and dislike when they see it.

What Makes Something Antique?

Originally, the word *antique* referred to things from ancient Greece and Rome. Until about 1870, the things we now call *antique* were known as "curiosities." Old English novels often include references to "curiosity shoppes," which were actually what we would today think of as antique stores.

For the next hundred years or so, until about 1980, only things over 100 years old were considered to be antique. Since that time, there has been a trend that calls anything made before the Second World War an antique, so 1940 is the cutoff point.

This distinction between what's antique and what's simply old is beginning to have less meaning, as the definitions change. In keeping with the integration of information in the twenty-first century, designers and decorators are less likely to adhere to arbitrary standards and cutoff dates. Instead, they borrow ideas from all time periods and all sources, depending on what's most appealing to them and most appropriate for the situation.

Color Preferences Profile

Colors affect people in different ways, partly because everyone sees colors differently. In addition, individuals have personal associations with certain colors that incline them to like or dislike those colors. One person may like a lot of green in his city apartment because the color reminds him of the woodsy rural area where he grew up. Another client may dislike green intensely simply because someone told her green brings bad luck. Someone else may dislike the blue because his neighbor's home burned down after it was painted blue. In other words, color preferences are truly a personal thing.

According to some researchers, people's reactions to colors in their daily environment affect their emotions, psychological well-being, and even physical health. So it's extremely important for an interior decorator to carefully consider color (Figure 20).

FIGURE 20—Color affects people in many different ways. As an interior decorator, you should carefully work with clients to determine what colors they like and what colors they dislike.

However, simply asking a client "What's your favorite color?" isn't sufficient for an interior decorator. A decorator must also know which colors a client *dislikes*. In fact, a decorator should find out how a client responds to all colors.

Figure 21 provides a profile you can use to determine the color preferences of your clients. Notice that the profile allows space to list the preferences of every family member. Because color can play such a big role in people's attitudes and moods, the color chosen for a room should be appropriate for all family members. Any color that's disliked by just one family member shouldn't be used in decorating rooms used by all members.

Fabric, Texture, and Pattern Preferences Profile

Fabrics, textures, and patterns are grouped together on one profile (Figure 22). Textures and patterns are related to fabric preference as well as to materials for wallcoverings and floor coverings.

So many sizes and types of patterns exist that only general categories are included on the profile. When completing this profile, you should have samples of different types of fabrics available for the client to look at and touch. Many people aren't familiar with the qualities of linen, velvet, chintz, and satin. Showing samples may also elicit a client's spontaneous reactions, which can give you a great deal of direction in choosing fabrics. If you don't have swatches to show your clients, you can use magazines, catalogs, and brochures to illustrate the different fabrics. You may decide to take your client to a showroom and go through the fabric samples, or simply roam the floor and ask your client to point out fabrics he or she likes. Tell the client your interest at this time is only in his or her general preferences. You're not yet ready to make specific choices for the final, decorated rooms.

COLOR PREFERENCES PROFILE				
Do you like colors that are	**(Fill in family member's name.)**			
Bright				
Bold				
Medium in brightness				
Mellow				
Subdued				
Do you like colors that are	**(Fill in family member's name.)**			
Light				
Medium				
Dark				
Do you like colors that are	**(Fill in family member's name.)**			
Warm (red, yellow)				
Cool (blue, green)				
Neutral (beige, gray)				

Specifically, do you like		
Yellow	Turquoise	Pumpkin
Red	Coral	Olive
Blue	Yellow-green	Rust
Orange	Gold	Brown
Green	Maroon	Pale yellow
Violet	Navy blue	Teal
Lemon	Mauve	Peach
Pink	Lime	Beige
Sky blue	Orchid	Gray
Aqua	Black	Gray-green
Melon	White	Other

What colors do you like together?

What colors do you dislike?	
Name of family member	Color dislikes

FIGURE 21—Color Preferences Profile

FABRIC, TEXTURE, AND PATTERN PREFERENCES PROFILE	
Fabrics	
Check All That Apply	**Comments**
Cotton ❒	
Linen ❒	
Velvet ❒	
Wool ❒	
Chintz ❒	
Satin ❒	
Synthetics ❒	
Textures	
Check All That Apply	**Comments**
Slick ❒	
Smooth ❒	
Soft ❒	
Woven ❒	
Crisp ❒	
Nubby ❒	
Patterns	
Check All That Apply	**Comments**
Bold floral ❒	
Restrained floral ❒	
Abstract ❒	
Plaids ❒	
Stripes ❒	
Tweed ❒	
Pictorial ❒	

FIGURE 22—Fabric, Texture, and Pattern Preferences Profile

Mood Preferences Profile

Before you begin this section, take a moment to study the *Mood Preference Profile* in Figure 23. Notice that the descriptive words listed all describe feelings. The term *mood* refers to feeling. Frequently, clients use mood words when they first attempt to describe what they want in their new interiors. They also frequently use mood words when attempting to describe the styles they like, and even to describe their color preferences.

Note: Complete a Mood Preference Profile for each room you're decorating.

Most people don't have any difficulty describing the mood they prefer in their surroundings. Mood is a personal matter. What you understand your clients to mean when they describe their mood preferences may vary considerably from what the clients envision. Make sure you understand what your clients are saying. If one client says "I want an exciting room," does that mean bright colors and patterns or a modern interior filled with black leather furniture and shiny acrylic tabletops? Once you clearly determine the mood a client wants, you must then begin to create that mood.

Mood is achieved through the total combined effect of all of the elements in a room. Color is generally the strongest single element of mood setting. Textures, lines, scale of furnishings, lighting, and choices of accessories are other important mood makers.

Through proper decorating, mood intensifies, it develops where it's nonexistent, or it changes entirely. Even without furnishings, a room has a certain feeling. It comes from the room's size and shape, the materials of which it's constructed, and any extraordinary features of the room. Mood also results from placement and size of windows, the view, and very importantly, the quality of natural light that enters the room.

Take a *bare-wall* look at your client's rooms. In other words, mentally strip away all of the present furnishings and see what's left. Does the bare-wall room have the mood your client wants—a mood that you'll emphasize and intensify? Before you begin to create a mood with furniture and accessories, you may need to take steps to alter the mood of the bare room.

MOOD PREFERENCE PROFILE			
Room		**Which of these best describes the overall feeling you would like your room to have?**	
		Dignified and formal	
		Somewhere between formal and casual	
		Casual	
		Very relaxed	
More specifically, what word or words best describes the mood, or feeling, you want your room to possess?			
Tranquil		Airy and open	
Exciting		A “daytime” feeling	
Cozy		A “nighttime” feeling	
Warm		Bright and well-lit	
Intimate		Sophisticated	
Cheerful		Uncluttered	
Elegant		Busy and filled with things	
Countrified		Other	
Dark and intimate with spots of light			

FIGURE 23—Mood Preference Profile

While you're taking a bare-wall look at your client's room, also determine the directional exposure of the windows. That is, do the windows face north, south, east, or west? If you're unsure how to determine which way a window faces, you can use a *directional compass,* which always points north. Such compasses are usually available from sporting goods stores. With a compass, you can tell what direction each window faces—that is, you can determine its exposure.

As you continue to examine the room, remember that you're seeing it at just one moment. Why is this important? Suppose you're examining a room at 10 o'clock in the morning and the room has windows that face east. At that time of day, the room will have a lot of sunshine flooding in. However, at 5 o'clock in the afternoon, the room won't have nearly as much light coming through the windows. If you know the exposure of the windows in a room, you can more accurately determine its day-long mood (Figure 24). For example, a southern exposure means a bright, cheerful mood in the winter months if sunlight floods the room. For a client who wants a cheerful room, you'll find it easy to enhance the existing mood. On the other hand, your client may have the instincts of a night owl and shudders at the thought of too much cheerfulness. Therefore, your decorating plan needs to alter the room. You'll need a warm, dark, cozy environment to make your client happy. Adding drapes that can be drawn shut when desired may be just what this client needs.

FIGURE 24—Knowing the exposure of the windows in a room can help you create the mood your client is looking for.

In the next section, you're going to begin your decorating plan by taking inventory of the current furnishings, by considering your client's budget, and by taking room measurements and drawing rough sketches. Before you go on to that material, please complete *Self-Check 2.*

Self-Check 2

1. Suppose your client's favorite color is blue. The only color she dislikes is brown. You see a printed wallcovering you think is just right for her living room. It's mostly blue, but it has some brown in it. The pattern, texture, and shade of blue are just right for the room. Would this wallcovering be an acceptable choice? Why?

   _____

   _____

2. What role does color play in developing the mood of a room?

   _____

3. Why is it important to know in which direction a room's windows face?

   _____

Check your answers with those on page 61.

THE PLAN BEGINS TO GROW

The process of developing your decorating plan has begun, and it will grow more exciting as it takes shape. When you approach the end of your client interview, don't leave out details. Knowing your client's priorities and budget will help you produce a successful plan. No part of your plan, right down to the location of the electrical outlets, is insignificant. A professional decorator leaves nothing to chance.

Room-by-Room Furnishings Inventory Profile

To develop your decorating plan, you must analyze the contents of each room to be decorated. List each item that will remain in the redecorated room and those that must be replaced or added. To complete an inventory, you can use a *Room-by-Room Furnishing Inventory Profile* (Figure 25). Although several rooms are included on the profile in Figure 25, you may need to use a whole sheet for each room being redecorated for a client.

ROOM-BY-ROOM FURNISHINGS INVENTORY PROFILE

Present Items to Be Retained	Condition	New Items Needed	New Items Desired
Living Room			
Family Room			
Master Bedroom			
Children's Room			
Guest Room			

FIGURE 25—Room-by-Room Furnishings Inventory Profile

Client Goals and Budget Priorities Profile

The *Client Goals and Budget Priorities Profile* should be completed before you close the first interview with a client.

First, set down the client's goals as one overall goal, such as "redecorate all rooms of the house except the playroom." Then divide this goal by priority. If your client indicates he or she can spend unlimited funds on completing the entire job immediately, you might think that there isn't a need to establish priorities, but there is.

For example, some items may turn out to be considerably more costly than anticipated. The unlimited funds may diminish for the time being. The client may need to postpone the rest of the decorating because the quality of decor is more costly than he or she originally thought.

If you don't establish priorities, buying and decorating may proceed on a hit-or-miss basis. A client who wanted to redo the unsatisfactory living room and den may end up with a beautiful new bedroom and dining room, but still have an uncomfortable living room and dingy den—simply because funds ran out. The client will then feel that she hasn't gotten very much for her money, since the major problem areas still exist. On the other hand, if you first complete those bothersome areas, your client can confidently postpone the rest of the job until she can afford to have it completed. The client will come back to you to have the job completed because she feels satisfied with your abilities so far.

If the client's budget is limited to start with, set priorities. Priorities will ensure that important, necessary items will be budgeted for appropriately. The less important ones will be allowed a smaller sum.

To work up a decorating budget, refer to the Room-by-Room Furnishings Inventory Profile in Figure 25. Then, make a priorities list in the Client Goals and Budget Priorities Profile in Figure 26. In this list, include all of the items that need to be in the budget. The client needs to specify the total sum allotted for the redecorating job. In some instances, you may need to provide the client with an educated "guesstimate" for the cost of the desired decorating plan before the client commits to your proposal.

CLIENT GOALS AND BUDGET PRIORITIES PROFILE	
Name	**Room**
Total Budgeted Amount $	
Client's Decorating Goals:	
Immediate	
Long-Range	
Item (in order of priorities)	**Estimated Cost**
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
11.	
12.	
Total Cost	

FIGURE 26—Client Goals and Budget Priorities Profile

Your ability to provide your client with good budgeting guidelines for purchases in the decorating plan will depend largely on the wisdom you gain from experience. As an interior decorator, it's up to you to be aware of the marketplace. You should know the diversity of furnishings and materials available for interior decoration and their approximate price ranges. As time goes on, you'll become increasingly knowledgeable and should be able to provide your clients with good budgeting estimates.

At first, you may need to reserve this matter of budgeting priorities to a second meeting with the clients. This meeting gives you the opportunity to look up some figures and check prices by making phone calls.

What percentage of the client's budget should be allotted to each part of the decorating job? From time to time, professional publications provide guidelines suggested by various decorators. One guideline suggests the following breakdown for each room of a decorating job:

- Living room 35 percent
- Dining room 25 percent
- Bedroom 20 percent
- Family room 10 percent
- Children's room 10 percent

Another guideline breaks down the budget for individual items:

- Furniture and bedding 45 percent
- Flooring 15 percent
- Walls 10 percent
- Window treatments 15 percent
- Accessories 15 percent

Unfortunately, these guidelines seldom work. Guidelines are generalizations, and successful interior decoration is a very personal, customized matter. For example, suppose a client has his heart set on a costly Oriental rug for the living room. In addition, the client doesn't care if he can't afford to finish decorating that room for another five years. You'll be performing a much greater service by guiding your client to the right Oriental rug than by trying to persuade the client into following a more conventional budgeting guideline. Then, you can work with your client to develop a five-year plan for completing the room.

When you're juggling the budget to complete a decorating job immediately, drop some items entirely and budget others at a lower figure than originally planned. However, never adjust the budget by settling for lesser quality on major items like beds, sofas, and carpeting. Save money through imaginative handling of inexpensive items for coffee tables, end tables, lamps, and accessories. Depending on the method you use to base your fees, this client budget may or may not include your fees.

Measurements, Rough Sketches, and Room Drawings to Scale

Before ending an interview or leaving a client's home (and certainly before you can estimate costs of items such as carpeting, draperies, and so on), you'll need more information to complete your client's profile. You must determine all of the basic room measurements. To make sure you get accurate measurements, you must have a quality measuring tape similar to the one shown in Figure 27. You can purchase one of these at most large hardware stores.

FIGURE 27—A sturdy, reliable measuring tape is important to making accurate measurements.

While you're at the client's home, measure the room or rooms to be decorated. Make a rough sketch of each room and include the measurements on this paper. The sketches don't have to be to scale at this point. Ask the client about current traffic patterns and note this on the sketch as well. You may

also wish to include the locations and dimensions of furniture that will remain in its present place in the room. You should also show the locations of doors, windows, heating sources, electrical outlets, and any other permanent fixtures. Figure 28 shows a rough sketch of a living room.

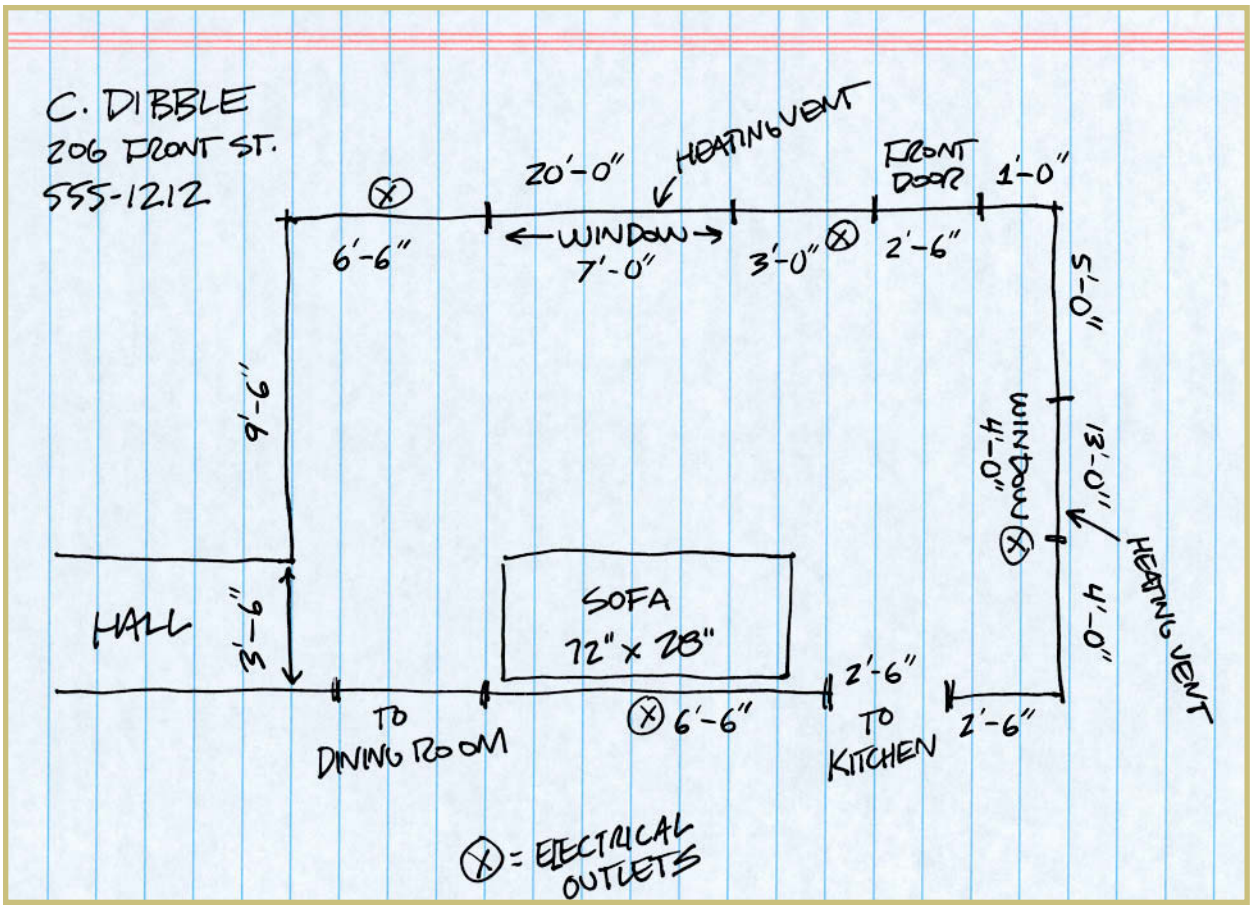


FIGURE 28—Although this sketch is very rough, it includes all of the information you'll need to make a scaled drawing of the room. Notice the location of the doors, windows, electrical outlets, and heating vents. Notice also that the client wants to keep the sofa right where it is. Finally, notice that the decorator has included the client's name, address, and telephone number on the sketch.

Make sure you collect all of the information you need and collect it accurately. Then when you return to your office, you'll have everything you need to make a scaled sketch of the room on a sheet like the one in Figure 29. If you're meeting with your client in your office or showroom and she tells you she doesn't know the exact dimensions of her rooms, that's OK. Plan a follow-up visit to allow for room measurements and rough sketches.

Client's name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Room _____

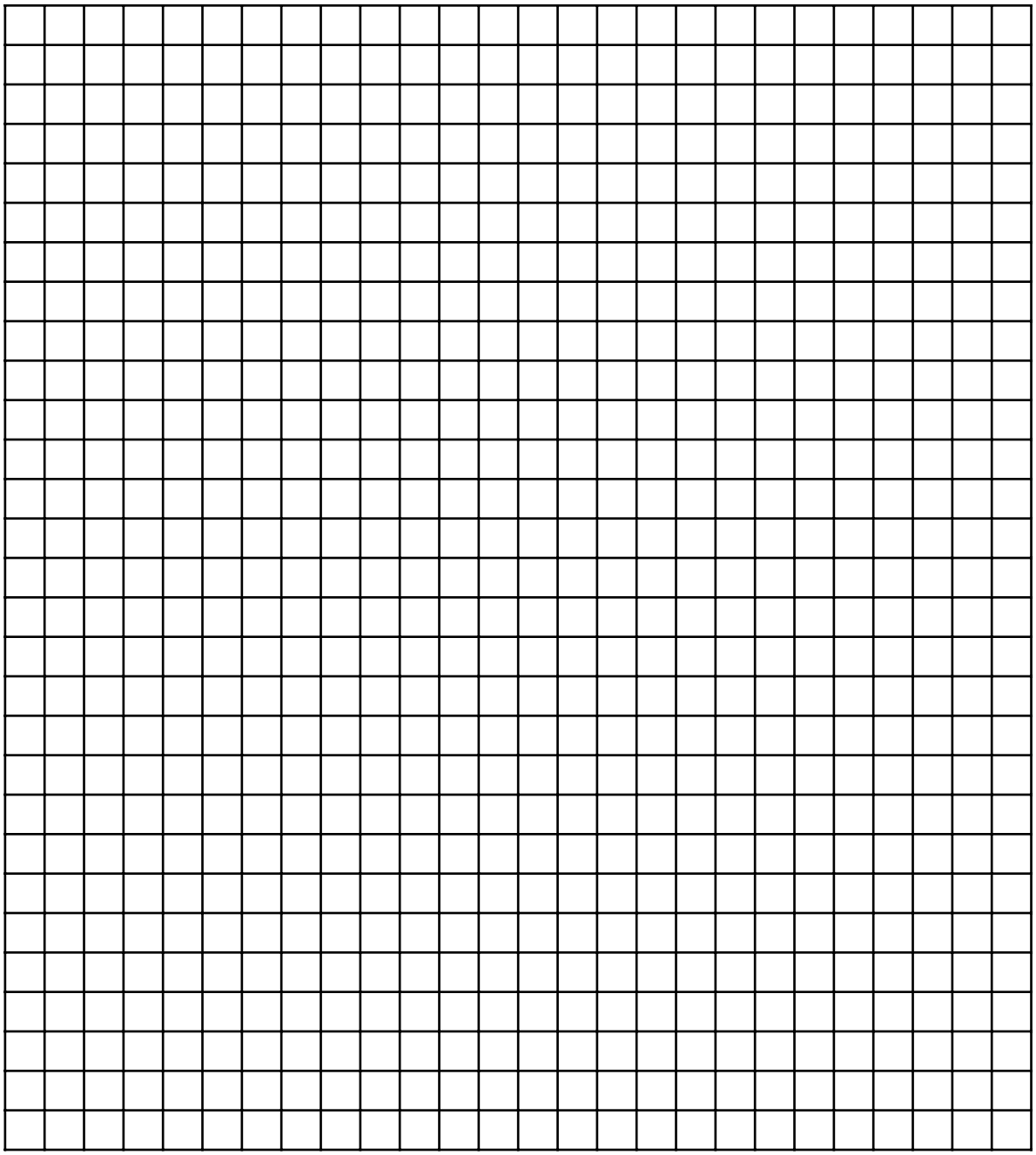


FIGURE 29—Room Drawing to Scale Profile. Graph paper like this makes it easy to draw rooms to scale.

Most nonprofessionals take room measurements and draw sketches in a haphazard way. They start to measure wherever they happen to be standing. They neglect to note the existence and placement of utilities and permanent fixtures. Professionals approach measuring and sketching seriously. They realize the rough sketch, the scaled drawing, and the information on them will serve as the models upon which the entire decorating plan will be built. As you proceed through this program, you'll learn more about how to measure and graph a room for a client.

As you develop your plan, you can assemble samples of paint, fabrics, and photos of your clients' preferences and add them to a *Samples Profile,* as shown in Figure 30.

SAMPLES PROFILE

Client's name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Room _____

FIGURE 30—A Samples Profile helps you to assemble the necessary materials to show your clients the colors and patterns you've selected for various parts of a room. Fill in the information at the top of the profile, and then attach any samples you've gathered for the job.

Decorating Tools

There are decorating tools that can help you and your clients envision a finished room. We'll examine two here to give you an idea of what's available to you.

E-Z Decorator

Cheryl Howard, a creative interior designer, developed a system for creating a finished decorating plan. This tool, called *E-Z Decorator,* allows you to create interior design illustrations, furniture layouts, and floor plans so you and your clients can actually see how a redecorated room will look. This easy-to-use, hands-on tool allows a decorator to insert decals on an overlay of a scaled room drawing. Figures 31 and 32 show portions of these layouts and a finished room design. The finished plan can be photocopied and colored

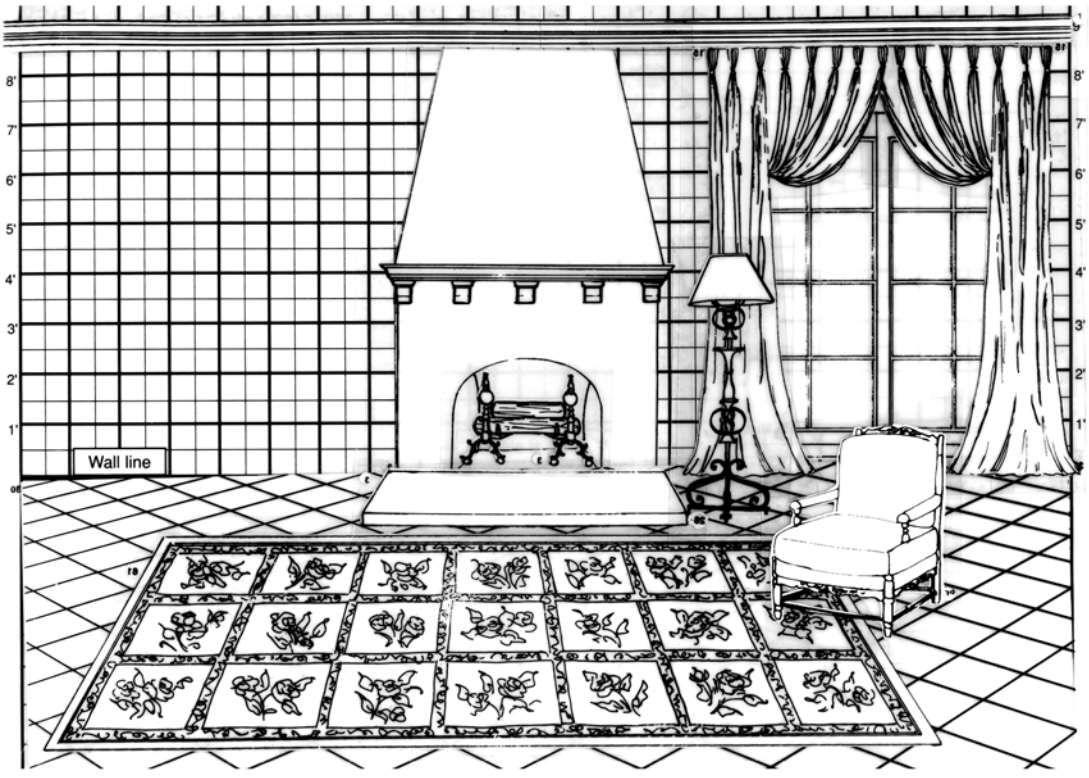


FIGURE 31—Cheryl Howard's E-Z Decorator Decal Overlays (Cheryl Howard's E-Z Decorator System)

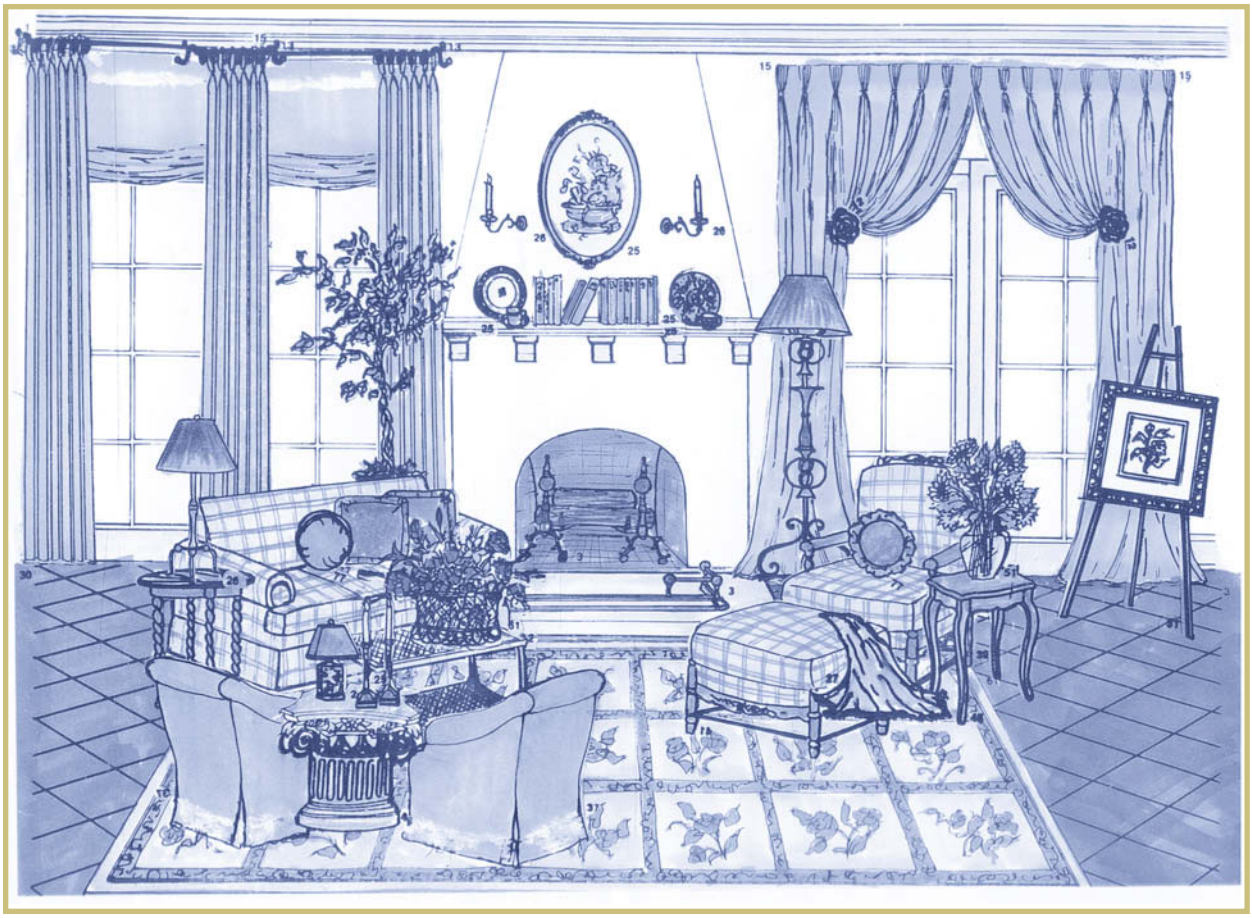


FIGURE 32—Cheryl Howard's E-Z Decorator Finished Room Design (Cheryl Howard's E-Z Decorator System)

according to your client's specifications. There are hundreds of decals for every decor, and this decorating tool is useful for both professionals and beginners in the field.

To learn more about the features of E-Z Decorator, visit **http://www.ezdecorator.com.**

Plan3D

Plan3D is a software program that allows you to see the layout of a house in a flat blueprint form or in three dimensions. With it, you can move walls, add sinks, add doors and windows, and place furniture in different areas at different angles. In essence, you can see how a room will look. Because it's 3D (three dimensional), you can actually walk through it. You can save your plans to your computer and print them—with

If you interview your clients and consistently follow their activities, preferences, and budget, you'll end up with a room everyone can enjoy.

different arrangements, color schemes, and views of the room. Plan3D even adds shadows and light, so you can test lighting options and see a convincing image of the room.

Service for Plan3D is relatively inexpensive. To view an online demo, visit **http://www.Plan3D.com.**

Structural Features

In your final consideration of a client's home on your first visit, you should examine the structural features of the room you're decorating. A careful analysis calls for mentally stripping it of its present furnishings and considering its essentials. Let's take a look at the structural features you should consider as your decorating plan begins. The features you should examine are

- Symmetry
- Ceiling height
- Room shapes
- Windows
- Built-ins
- Permanent fixtures

Symmetry

The *symmetry* (even balance) or *asymmetry* (uneven balance) in the elements of an unfurnished room determines whether the room is essentially formal or informal. The elements in an asymmetrical room make it easiest to complete as an informal room. For example, an asymmetrical room may have a fireplace in a corner with a single unmatched window on one wall. It's considerably more difficult to make this type of room a formal room.

Evenly balanced room elements, such as a wall with an exactly centered fireplace and a set of identical windows on either side, make the room easily decorated in a formal style. Figure 33 illustrates examples of asymmetrical and symmetrical room structures.

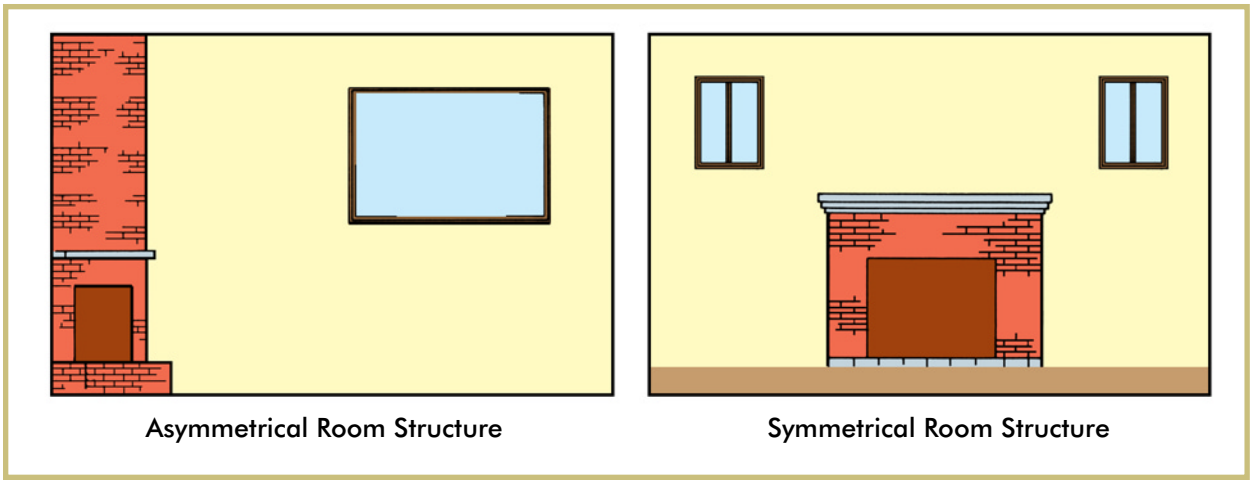


FIGURE 33—Asymmetrical and Symmetrical Room Structures

Ceiling Height

Ceilings in contemporary homes are either standard height (8 or 9 feet), or they soar to interesting angles. In converted buildings and older homes, unusually high or low flat ceilings are more common. Such ceilings affect the mood of the room.

A particularly low ceiling gives a cozy feeling to a room. A warm, informal decor is easy to accomplish in such a room. As a decorator, you could be challenged when a more elegant decor is desired in a room with a low ceiling. For a more intimate mood in a room with a high ceiling, you'll need to pay special attention to the decorating treatment and counteract the effect of these high ceilings.

Figure 34 gives a typical example of a low ceiling and a high ceiling.

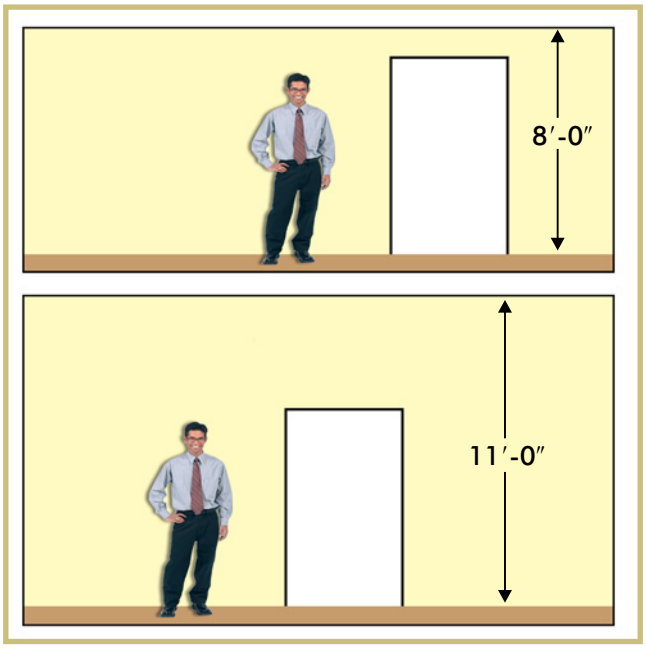


FIGURE 34—The ceiling height in your client's home will affect your decorating treatments.

Room Shapes

The rooms you'll be decorating will require different decorating styles depending on the shapes of the rooms and your client's preferences. Figure 35 shows three types of room shapes you may encounter on your decorating jobs.

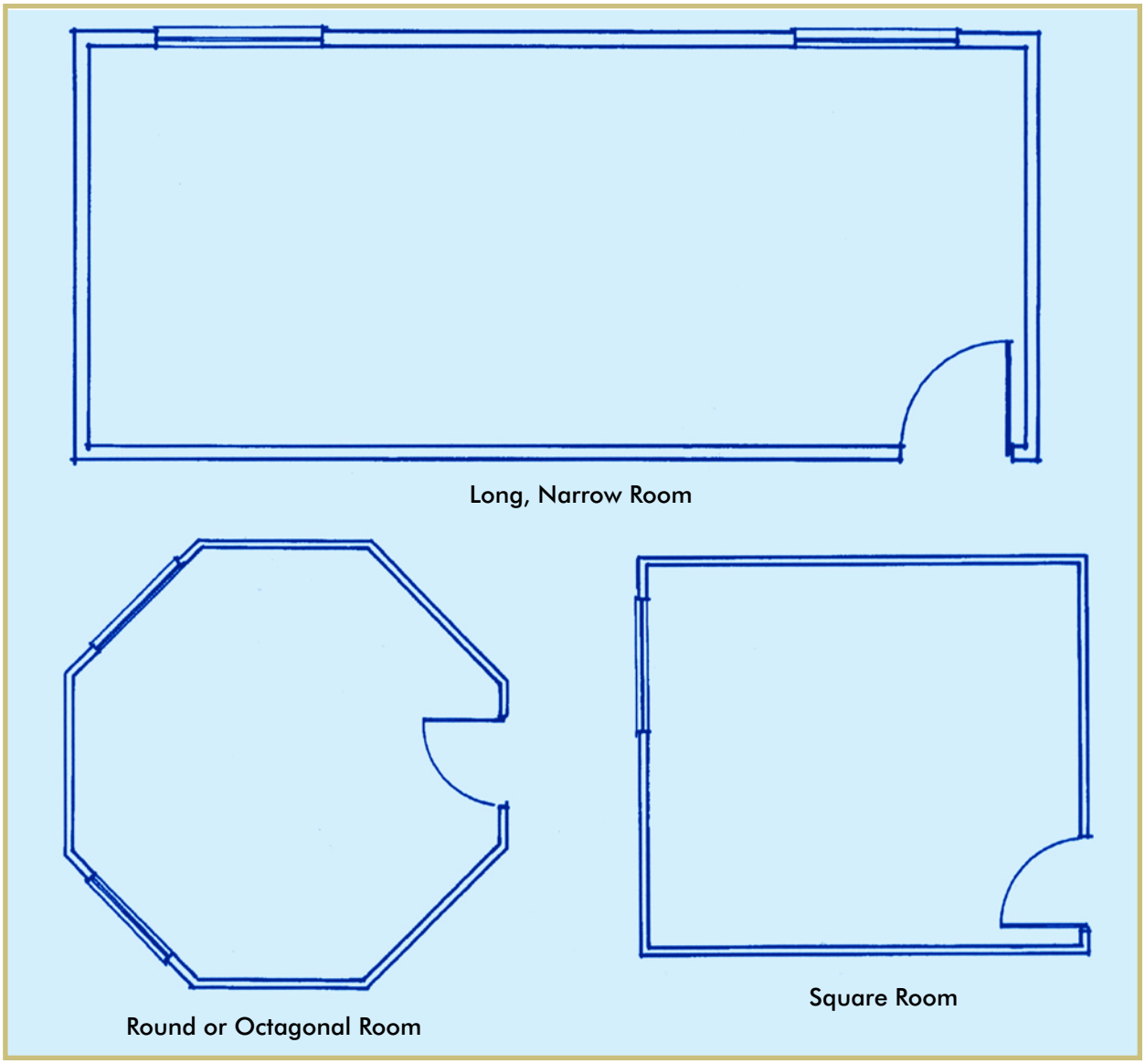


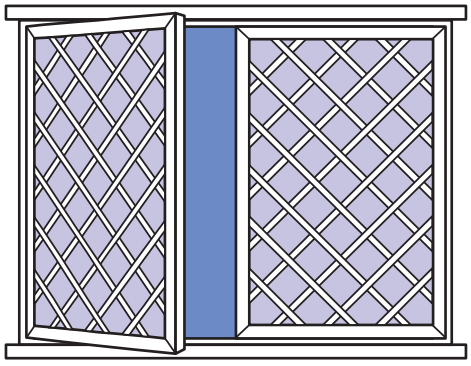
FIGURE 35—Room Shapes

A long, narrow room tends to feel formal. Its mood can work well if the room is a dining room for formal entertaining. However, creating an intimate or cozy mood in a narrow room is a true challenge to a decorator. A round or octagonal room generally has more natural warmth than a rectangular room. It's easily adaptable to many mood treatments. An almost square room is the easiest to decorate. You can decorate a square room in either a formal or an informal style.

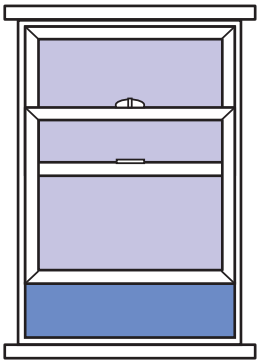
Windows

Besides letting in light and framing the outdoor view, windows help set the mood of a room by their shapes and placement. Generally, the style of the windows should match the mood of the other features in the room. However, the style of the windows may be in conflict with the rest of the room. These windows will require special decorating treatment to overcome this bad effect.

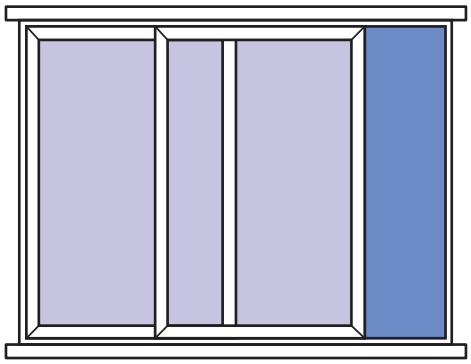
Different types of windows require different decorating treatments. For example, casement windows and arched windows lend themselves to traditional and period styles. Arched windows may also be used with a contemporary look. French windows are best with traditional decor. Any aluminum-framed windows are incompatible to period decor and require careful treatment to make them work. Figure 36 shows several types of windows you may encounter in your decorating jobs.



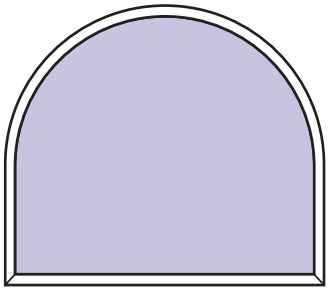
(A) Casement Window



(B) Single-Hung and Double-Hung Windows



(C) Sliding Window



(D) Arched Window

FIGURE 36—Here are a few of the types of windows you may encounter in your decorating career. (A) Casement windows open with cranks or levers that open them like doors. (B) Single- and double-hung windows are similar in appearance. Single-hung windows open only from the bottom; double-hung windows open from both the top and the bottom. (C) Sliding windows have sashes that move on a horizontal track. (D) Arched windows are generally stationary windows with a curved top.

Built-Ins

Built-ins, such as bookcases, usually provide a comfortable, livable mood to a room. A built-in allows a decorator a greater range of colors, fabrics, and furniture styles for completing a warm, homey decor. A formal decor may call for masking such built-ins with screens or formal accessories. Figure 37 shows an example of a typical built-in—a set of bookcases surrounding a fireplace.

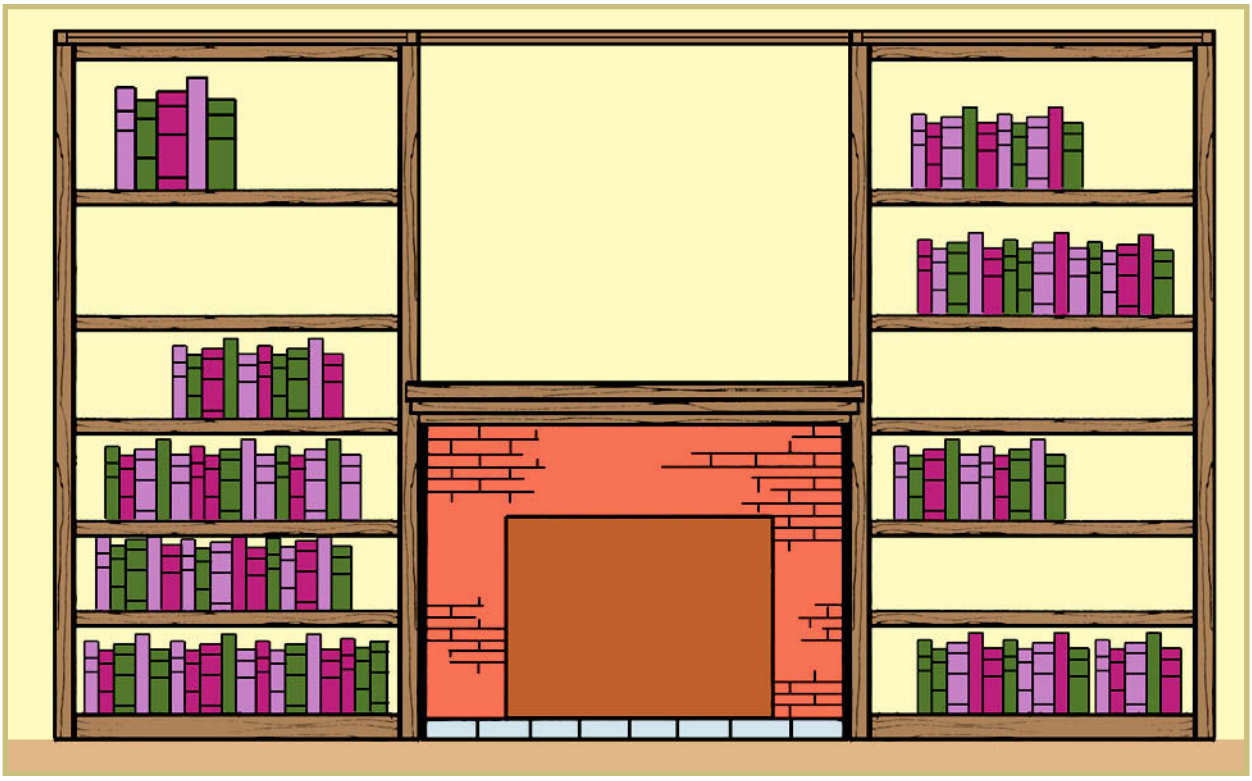


FIGURE 37—Built-ins, like these bookcases, often make a room cozier.

Finding Help

The Internet has a wealth of information on all sorts of subjects, and interior decorating is no exception. One example is the Web site for *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine at

http://www.bhg.com

At their home page, click on the **Decorating** tab near the top left. You'll find all sorts of decorating ideas on a wide variety of topics. Check it out.

Permanent Fixtures

Positions of radiators, wall heaters, and other immovable fixtures may affect the mood of a room. An old-fashioned radiator doesn't exactly go with an Oriental style, for example. Special decorating treatments may be needed to make such fixtures fit with the desired mood. Figure 38 shows some examples of permanent fixtures.

Congratulations! You've just completed your study of *Meeting Your Client's Needs.* Please complete *Self-Check 3* and then review for the examination.

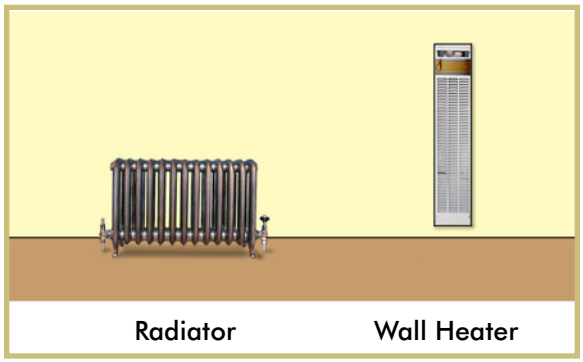
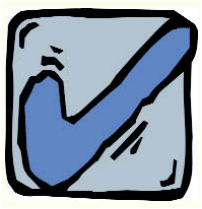


FIGURE 38—Permanent fixtures often create special challenges for decorators.



Self-Check 3

1. Suppose your client wants her living room redecorated. However, she has a limited budget. To make her decorating dollar go further, you have to either reupholster her couch in an inexpensive fabric, or spend less money on lamps. Which should you choose to do? Why?

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. What are the two models that an entire decorating plan is built on?

   _____

3. Can published budget guidelines be used to determine the budgets of each of your decorating clients?

   _____

Check your answers with those on page 62.

Self-Check 1

1. Consider your client's physical and psychological needs in the development of a decorating plan.
2. Your decorating scheme might reflect (1) your client's actual lifestyle or (2) the lifestyle your client would like to have.
3. The decorating plan should complement your client's appearance. A home is a custom setting for your client. It should reflect his or her color preferences and physical size.
4. Consider whether your client in the insurance industry (1) must do business entertaining at home, (2) must bring work home from the office, and (3) if so, what sort of space she needs to do it.
5. b. Plan a dogproof interior, using materials that won't be damaged by the dogs. The client who allows the family's dogs the run of the house won't be happy keeping those pets outdoors. As an interior decorator, consider your client's habits, and work with them instead of against them.

Self-Check 2

1. You shouldn't use any color your client actively dislikes. The brown in the wallcovering makes it unacceptable for your client no matter how much you like it and no matter how much it goes with the room.
2. Color is generally the most important element in creating a room's mood.
3. The room's exposure tells the interior decorator how much natural light enters the room. Lighting influences the decorator's choice of materials to create the desired mood in the room.

Answers

Self-Check 3

1. You should spend less money on the lamps and choose a quality upholstery fabric for the couch. You should set the couch as a priority because the couch will receive a great deal of wear.
2. The rough sketch and the scaled drawing are the basis of a good decorating plan. Measurements for these drawings should be taken carefully and represented accurately for a decorating plan to work.
3. No, published budget guidelines are too general to follow for every client. Decorating is a personal, customized matter that should be individualized for every new client.

Meeting Your Client's Needs

EXAMINATION NUMBER

01202200

Whichever method you use in submitting your exam answers to the school, you must use the number above.

For the quickest test results, go to http://www.takeexamsonline.com

When you feel confident that you have mastered the material in this study unit, go to http://www.takeexamsonline.com and submit your answers online. If you don't have access to the Internet, you can phone in or mail in your exam. Submit your answers for this examination as soon as you complete it. *Do not wait until another examination is ready.*

Questions 1–20: Select the one best answer to each question.

1. Your client wants his dining room to be a cozy, dark, night-time room where he can entertain just one or two people for casual, intimate dinners. The room won't be used during the day. The unfurnished room has a low seven-foot ceiling, two small windows facing north, and one doorway. It measures 10 feet (2.9 meters) by 12 feet (3.6 meters) with no other distinguishing features. To create the mood your client wants, you'll need to

   A. counteract the conflicting moods in the unfurnished room.
   B. emphasize existing qualities of the room since they suit the decorating requirements.
   C. put up a false wall to shorten the room.
   D. have the ceiling raised if the budget allows.

Examination

2. You're currently redecorating a client's living room. In the room are two pieces that he wants to keep. One is a favorite chair that would need re-covering to go with the new decor, and the other is a large enameled cabinet whose color is wrong for the new decor. Which of these would be your *best* course of action?

   A. Try to convince him that both pieces should be disposed of, since it will be easier to decorate without them.
   B. Plan to re-cover the chair. Ask if the client will consider repainting the cabinet or putting it in another room.
   C. Dispose of the chair and repaint the cabinet.
   D. Try to place both pieces in other rooms.

3. Which one of these client factors will generally have the *greatest* influence on your decorating plan?

   A. Age
   B. Lifestyle
   C. Occupation
   D. Color preference

4. Your client has said that he likes French Provincial furniture. What should you do before continuing to develop a decorating plan in that style for him?

   A. Show him examples of French Provincial and other styles to check on whether he knows styles and has expressed what he really wants.
   B. Let him know that you could give him a special discount on some Oriental furniture you have left over from another job.
   C. Decide whether you think the style is right for him and tell him which style you prefer.
   D. Check his color and fabric preferences to see if they allow you to use French Provincial.

5. Because of your client's job, he must live in a city apartment. He's increasingly tired of city life, however, and daydreams about living on a peaceful tropical island. He does no business entertaining at his apartment but occasionally brings other visitors there. Which one of these decorating plans will probably be *best* for him?

   A. Sophisticated city look that reflects his business life
   B. Barefoot and serene tropical decor to reflect the lifestyle he wishes he had
   C. Plain, nonstylized environment, neither city nor tropical, so that he won't be reminded of his conflicts
   D. Refined traditional look with one or two large tropical accessories

6. Your clients are Mr. and Mrs. Jones. Mrs. Jones has told you that she would like to see her living room done with lots of blues and greens against white walls. The only color she doesn't care for is pink. Mr. Jones likes tan, gray, and blue. He dislikes all shades of green and any color in strong bold tones. Which of these would be the *best* color scheme for you to suggest for meeting your clients' needs?

   A. Blue and green and white
   B. Pale blue and very pale lime green and white
   C. Pale blue, pale green, and tan
   D. Pale blue, tan, and white

7. You're meeting with your new clients, Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey, who want you to decorate their living room. Mr. Godfrey has said that he definitely wants a clean, uncluttered look in his home. Mrs. Godfrey says wistfully that she likes Victorian style, but Mr. Godfrey has always cringed at what he calls that fussy-looking stuff. Which of these would be your *best* course of action?

   A. Develop a clean, uncluttered modern decor to please Mr. Godfrey.
   B. Develop a Victorian style room for Mrs. Godfrey.
   C. Keep peace by introducing a totally separate decor suggestion that doesn't include either of their specifications.
   D. Show them how it's possible to combine a Victorian flavor with the uncluttered look Mr. Godfrey likes.

8. Which one of these factors is generally the *strongest* single element in creating the mood of a room?

   A. Furniture style
   B. Color
   C. Accessories
   D. Its bare-wall structure

9. The *most* effective approach to redecorating your client's rooms is to

   A. determine the client's particular needs and meet them.
   B. replace the client's furnishings with the newest styles available.
   C. design a decorating scheme based on your own favorite decor elements.
   D. educate the client to appreciate and desire the finest period decor.

10. Your client is a petite, pale, blue-eyed, and very soft-spoken woman. Which one of the following color schemes would provide the most flattering environment for her?

    A. Strong colors, such as bright red and hot pinks
    B. Her favorite pastel colors, such as a delicate pink and subdued, light greens
    C. Earth tones, such as reddish browns and rich, dark golds
    D. Dark Victorian colors that enhance the woodwork, such as muddy browns, reds, and greens

11. Which of the following factors determines the directional exposure of a room?

A. The direction each window faces
B. The direction the seating faces
C. The direction you face as you enter
D. The direction the doorway faces (outward)

12. If you had to choose only from the following, which of these would be the *best* lounge chair to select for your client's room? (Remember the client's basic needs.)

A. The most comfortable
B. The one that best matches the style of the room, whatever it is
C. The costliest he or she can afford
D. The best-looking chair

13. Your client wants to redecorate his entire home and to have only the finest quality of each item he selects. He has a limited amount to spend, and the job will need to be completed in stages over three years. According to what you read in this study unit, which is probably the *best* method of budgeting for this particular project?

A. Budget a percentage for furniture, percentage for floor covering, percentage for walls, and so on.
B. Budget a percentage for each room.
C. Budget according to priorities.
D. It's not possible to establish a budget in this case.

14. Your client has lived in her modest apartment for several years. The bedroom is small and cluttered. A sewing machine and straight chair are placed in front of the room's only window. She says she sews a lot, usually in the mornings. She has found this room the best place to work because of the morning sun. Which of these is your *best* approach to this decorating challenge?

A. Explain that the room is too cluttered and the sewing machine will have to be kept in a closet and brought out only for use.
B. In developing a decorating plan, put the sewing machine into an unobtrusive corner in the large living room and disguise it.
C. Refuse the job since there's little hope of success.
D. Unclutter the bedroom in other ways. Leave the sewing machine where it is.

15. The total cost to decorate your client's bedroom is over her budget. On which of these items should you make the final cost cuts?

A. Bed
B. Carpeting
C. Lamps
D. Chest of drawers

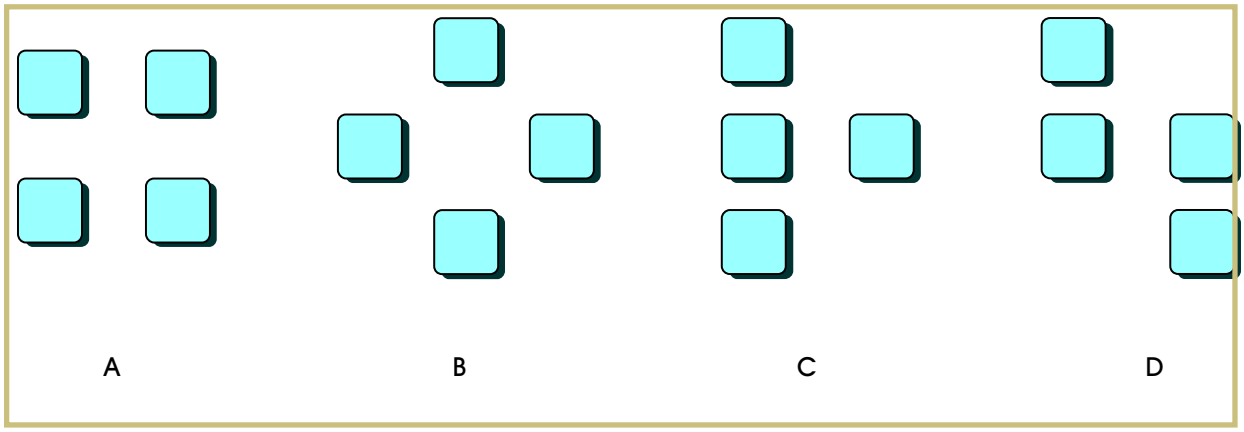
16. In measuring and sketching a client's room, which of these should you always be sure to include?

A. Colors of the walls
B. Planned positions of new furnishings
C. Positions of electrical outlets and permanent fixtures
D. Positions of present furnishings

17. Your client has seen a very costly brass bed that she's determined to have. It appears to you to be a good item for her room and worth its price. Unfortunately, its cost exceeds the entire amount planned for redecorating her bedroom. The living room is to be redecorated, too. What should you do?

A. See what can be eliminated from the client's budget to pay for the balance of the bed. Then reassess the remaining budget for priorities.
B. Convince her to forget about the bed until some future time when she can afford it. Stick to the original budget.
C. Get the bed for her. Postpone the rest of the bedroom and living room redecorating until she can afford it.
D. Redecorate only the living room at this time. Redecorate the bedroom when she can afford what she wants.

18. Which one of the following drawings illustrates an asymmetrical arrangement?



19. Assume that you've decorated the room in the Examination Figure 1. Your clients required that the room be both a nighttime room and a pleasant daytime retreat on weekends? What one factor *most* makes the room meet that requirement?

A. The combination of casual and sophisticated furnishings
B. The plain style of the upholstered pieces
C. The combination of light and dark in the upholstery, floor, and wood
D. The window treatment, with draperies ready to be pulled at night

EXAMINATION FIGURE 1

20. What type of window is shown in the kitchen in Examination Figure 2?

A. Arched
B. Double-hung
C. Casement
D. Sliding

EXAMINATION FIGURE 2